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ABSTRACT

This discussion guide on the conference theme, Library and Information Services for Meeting Personal Needs, is intended to provide a starting point and a possible framework for discussion of the issues involved in the provision of information to meet needs ranging from basic facts about survival to advanced forms of intellectual self-realization, for users from widely varying backgrounds and age groups. Following a general introduction, background information is presented in each of five discussion-topic sections, which in turn are subheaded with a variety of sample discussion alternatives. The five issues are concerned with (1) whether library and information providers should offer new services to meet personal needs; (2) national policy issues that must be addressed if libraries and information services are to effectively meet personal needs; (3) how library and information services should be expanded or redesigned to meet the needs of special constituencies; (4) what legislative and funding initiatives are required to foster effective use of limited library resources; and (5) measures that will encourage maximum use of the nation's information resources. A summary in Spanish and a list of nine references are included. (SW)

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LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR MEETING PERSONAL NEEDS

A Discussion Guide

by

Patricia Glass Schuman

Prepared for the White House Conference on
Library and Information Services

October 1979

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PREFACE

This discussion guide is intended as an informative and provocative summary of some of the many issues present in this theme. The guide was not planned to be exhaustive but to raise questions and stimulate discussion.

The guide has been prepared by an individual whose knowledge of the subject area is respected by colleagues and members of the community. In writing the guide, the author drew on the issues and resolutions raised in pre-Conference activities, documented in the many pre-Conference publications issued by the White House Conference staff. The author also drew on her own experience and background. The views and opinions expresssed in the guide do not necessarily reflect the official position or policy of either the White House Conference staff or the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS).

The purpose of the guide is not to dictate the issues to be discussed but rather to provide some general background and to crystalize some of the major questions delegates may wish to address at the Conference. Final responsibility for deciding what issues are to be discussed and what resolutions are to be passed rests with you, the delegate.

Marilyn K. Gell
Director
White House Conference
on Library and Information
Services
October 1979

ABSTRACT

Personal information needs range from basic facts about survival to advanced forms of intellectual self-realization. Questions such as where to live, how to get a job, where to go to school, what to base an opinion on, or where to obtain health or legal information all require information for decision-making.

This information is provided by libraries of all types, television, radio, newspapers and books, families and friends, government, database producers and social service agencies. Some basic questions relating to how personal needs can be met through library and information services are:

- Should emphasis be placed on traditional services, or should priority be set on developing new services such as information and referral or repackaging of information? What type of cooperation is desirable between libraries and other agencies such as public broadcasting, postal services, or educational institutions?

- How should such services be expanded or redesigned to meet the needs of special populations, for example, the handicapped and ethnic minorities? What are the implications for training of library and information professionals?

- How can libraries reconcile the increasing gap between their financial constraints and a commitment to play an expanded and dynamic role in this area? Are fees to users appropriate? Do alternatives exist to current funding structures? What types of legislation are required? Should there be a National Library Act governing Federal assistance and programs for libraries? Is a national library agency needed?

- How can service providers increase the use of information resources by individuals at all levels of society? To what extent can technology be used to enhance delivery of information? What type of research is needed to support the development of library and information services?

- What national policy issues must be addressed if library and information services are to effectively meet personal information needs? Should libraries be given preferential postal and telecommunications rates? Should Federal funding be sought to encourage development of certain types of services? How can the individual's privacy be protected in an information society?

EXTRACTO EN ESPANOL

Servicios de Informacion y Bibliotecas para
Cumplir con las necesidades personales del publico

Las necesidades personales del publico para la informacion se extienden desde los datos mas basicos y necesarios para poder sobrevivir en esta sociedad hasta las formas mas avanzadas del desarrollo intelectual del individuo. Para que se pueda tomar una decision inteligente en asuntos como donde uno debe vivir, como conseguir trabajo, cuales son las mejores instituciones de educacion, como formar una opinion sobre cualquier asunto, o donde conseguir informacion juridica e informacion sobre la salud, hay que poner a la disposicion del publico la informacion necesaria.

Esta informacion esta proporcionada por bibliotecas de todo tipo, por la television, la radio, los periodicos y libros, parientes y amigos, el gobierno, sistemas de computadoras, y las agencias de servicios sociales. Algunas de las preguntas basicas en relacion a como se puede cumplir con las necesidades personales del publico por los servicios de informacion y bibliotecas son:

- Hay que dar mas enfasis a los servicios tradicionales o deberiamos dar mas prioridad al desarrollo de nuevos servicios como los de informacion y ayuda en dirigir a la gente o el de acumular informacion y hacerla mas comprensible, conforme con las necesidades del publico? Que tipo de cooperacion es necesaria entre bibliotecas y otras agencias como la radiodifusion publica, el servicio de correos o instituciones de educacion?

- Como se pueden extender o cambiar los servicios para cumplir con las necesidades de las minorias en la poblacion, por ejemplo los invalidos y grupos etnicos? Cuales son los requisitos para el entrenamiento de gente profesional en el ramo de las bibliotecas y de la informacion?

- Como pueden tratar, las bibliotecas, con el problema de la escasez de fondos y su obligacion a tener una voz mas grande y mas dinamico en este asunto? Deberian exigir pago de la gente que utiliza las bibliotecas? Existen alternativas al sistema actual de apropriar fondos? Que tipos de legislacion son necesarios para llevarlas al cabo? Deberiamos crear una Ley Nacional sobre Bibliotecas para reglamentar ayuda federal y programas bibliotecarios? Existe la necesidad de una Agencia Nacional de Bibliotecas?

- Como pueden aumentar el uso de facilidades de informacion los proveedores de estos servicios, en todos los niveles de la sociedad? Hasta que punto se puede utilizar la tecnologia en hacer mas accesible esta informacion? Que tipo de investigacion se necesita para ayudar en el desarrollo y mejoramiento de servicios de informacion y bibliotecas?

- Cuales aspectos de la politica nacional deben ser examinados o cambiados para asegurar que los servicios de informacion y bibliotecas cumplan con las necesidades personales del publico con mas eficacia? Deberian dar preferencia a las bibliotecas en cuanto a precios postales y los precios de servicios de telecomunicacion? Deberian pedir fondos del gobierno federal para promover el desarrollo de ciertos tipos de servicios? Como puede la privacidad de los ciudadanos ser protegida donde el acceso a informacion personal es disponible a traves de computadoras?

DEFINITION AND SCOPE

The need to know is not new. What is unprecedented today is the amount of information an individual requires to negotiate his or her way through complex social and economic structures and the power of that information to determine who will do well and who will do poorly in our society. What is also unprecedented is the vast amount of information and the electronic technologies available for creating, processing, and transferring it.

"Information age" . . . "knowledge society" . . . "post-industrial society" — these are phrases frequently used to describe our shift from a society with a manufacturing base to one in which information is the basic moving force. We are, in fact, rapidly becoming an "information society." A recent U.S. Department of Commerce report concludes that almost 50 percent of the U.S. Gross National Product (GNP) relates to the production, processing and distribution of information; over half of the U.S. labor force is involved in some form of information processing. The information industries have grown more than twice as fast as the GNP during recent years.

Although individuals in an information-demanding society may theoretically be surrounded by an abundance of information resources, they face a multiplicity of diverse and often confusing choices for obtaining informaton. Information is provided through a myriad of delivery systems: public libraries, special libraries, television, radio, newspapers, telephone, families, friends, publishers, government, database producers, database brokers, and social service agencies. These methods of delivery cross lines between the public and private sectors. While these information sectors are closely intertwined, conflicts have arisen as a result of the seemingly divergent goals of free access and free markets.

Some feel that only public libraries can offer the wide variety of information the individual needs, while others believe that the private sector can more efficiently meet information needs. Many maintain that it is imperative to the public interest that the total information resources of the Nation be cohesively strengthened for maximum access and utilization. This debate is intensified by both the high capital investment necessary for the private sector to provide information services and the decline in taxpayer support of local public library budgets.

Personal information needs range from basic facts about survival to advanced forms of intellectual self-realization. Questions such as where to live, how to get a job, what to buy, where to travel, where to go to school, what to base an opinion on, whom to vote for, where to obtain health or legal information, and how to cope with a crisis all require information for decisionmaking. On another level, people also need to know who they are, where they come from, and where they are going.

Variables that affect such information needs include: age, economic level, occupation, employment status, language, ethnic background, health, mobility, geography, and educational level. Also important are the roles we play as workers, parents, citizens, and consumers.

Personal needs are not filled by just isolated facts but also by ideas and concepts. Who should be responsible for the transfer of information from the producers to the users? Publishers? Database brokers? Teachers? Librarians? Other professionals? We may live in an information society, but the numbers of "information-poor" are increasing. While technology can reduce the costs of storing, retrieving, and processing information, the costs of intellectual labor responsible for creating current and credible information are rising rapidly.

While technological developments such as microcomputers, satellite communications, cable technology, and home information systems may provide opportunities for more efficient exploitation of information resources by individuals, there is still a lag in the creation of software to effectively package information to meet individual needs. Technology also brings up the spectres of control, lack of privacy, and the erosion of individual rights. Communications technology holds the promise of both increased individualized power and the danger of mass manipulation.

The difficulties in distinguishing the owners, renters, sellers, and buyers of information are becoming increasingly complex because of the rapid growth of individualized information as a leisure activity. The popularity of CB radios, photographic equipment, home computers, and audio and video recorders are just a few examples of this phenomenon. While the question of ownership and cost are important, the major issue is: how will information resources be equitably allocated to meet personal needs? The solution is essential to the growth of a democratic society. Some may receive more benefit from new technologies and information services because they have both the sophistication to use them and the money to pay for them. Computer literacy may soon become more important than print literacy.

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), in order to provide a long-term focus for its activities, has adopted the following goals:

> To eventually provide every individual in the United States with equal opportunity of access to that part of the total information resource which will satisfy the individual's educational, working, cultural and leisure-time needs and interests, regardless of the individual's location, social or physical condition or level of achievement. (NCLIS 1975)

How can this goal be achieved? This discussion guide is intended to provide a starting point and a possible framework for the discussion of issues involved in meeting personal needs through library and information services. Some key considerations in formulating solutions to the issues involved in library and information services to meet personal needs are:

- What is the end goal?
- Why should it be achieved?
- Who should support and implement the action?
- When should the action be implemented?
- When should it be completed?
- How could this be funded?

Issue #1: Should library and information providers offer new services to meet personal needs?

BACKGROUND

At least 50 billion dollars is reportedly presently expended on information services in the United States. These dollars are spent for telephone utilities, postal services, mass communications, computer software, publishing, libraries, and similar services. The number of books in print has risen more than 25 percent in the past five years. This is just a partial indication of the tremendous growth in information production and consumption. And the growth is not only in the area of scientific information but in the type and amount of "life-information" — information an individual needs to successfully negotiate his or her way through life.

As our society moves further away from the nuclear family, as social structures change, and as we become more geographically mobile, traditional life-information systems such as friends and family are less accessible. This is compounded by the fact that the amounts of information available have overloaded the ability of these systems to deal with them.

The mass media (television and radio), books, newspapers, and magazines fill some information needs on a "macro" level. That is, they provide certain wide-ranging blocks of information to large audiences. Libraries have traditionally provided similar "macro" blocks of information, but in recent years there has been considerable movement toward the provision of "micro" information to fill the specific needs of specific users. Some libraries and social service agencies have been moving toward information and referral services that assist people with specific problems, for example, where do I go to find out what my social security benefits are? With the exception of some innovative programs, a traditional passive stance prevails; users are required to

know enough to come into the library and often to help themselves. Many "micro" information services are being provided by private information brokers and database services.

Public libraries, by their own best estimates, reach less than half of the adult population. Data regarding the costs of services, users and nonusers of services, and patterns of information need are scarce.

Libraries could play a new — more expanded — role as an information mediator, facilitating the flow and communication of information through whatever means are appropriate. They could become bridges between the producers, the technology, and the end-users, ensuring that information is communicated. Libraries also have the potential to provide highly interpretive, selective, and personalized information services.

The most important personal information needs individuals have are: access to and for information; comprehensible and personalized information systems; and control and input into these systems. It has been argued that librarians, with their expertise in organizing and accessing information, are the ideal professionals to play the role of information mediators. But if libraries are to expand their roles, they will also need to deal with new methods of delivery. Services may have to be delivered to people where they are — at home, in neighborhood centers, and in remote places. And delivery may involve new technological media — television, electronic mail, and other new forms.

There are various levels of choices between "bureaucratized information" and information tailored to meet individual needs. These choices range from centralized sources for standardized packets of information to information produced "on demand" for a specific need. There

are, of course, cost and efficiency implications; individualized services can be expensive, but the cost of maintaining centralized bureaucracies is also great. Institutional priorities will need to be reordered in order to foster cooperation to flexibly meet personal information needs and to discourage jurisdictional disputes. Mechanisms will need to be developed for performance, monitoring, evaluation, feedback, and accountability. Research is imperative to determine the modes, formats, and response times necessary to meet user needs.

TRADITIONAL VS. EXPANDED SERVICES

The traditional service point of view holds that libraries should continue to provide materials for educational, recreational, and cultural enrichment to those citizens who value them, i.e., those who are already library users. While perhaps library services need to be publicized further, and certainly funded at higher levels, special information needs should be met by the private sector or social service agencies. Anything more than traditional service will tax the public library's shrinking resources to the breaking point. Libraries providing more specialized programs and services have usually been encouraged to do so through Federal or other special funding; libraries experimenting with databases have often been faced with a choice between charging user fees or not implementing these services at all. It is argued that libraries should concentrate on what they already know how to do well — collection and preservation of materials and basic reference services.

Others argue that while funding is certainly a major problem, the library can and should play a stronger role in providing access to information to all. At present, the stored knowledge contained in libraries is neither readily accessible nor heavily accessed. Often the use of a library requires considerable determination and sophistication.

Through new funding programs, cooperation, networks, and other methods — appropriate levels of support can be achieved. Basic to this is a reordering of institutional priorities in order to make libraries the first place a user turns to for information. Many experiments such as information and referral centers and job information centers have been successful. However, because of the nature of information, as well as the rapidly changing methods of transmission and storage, libraries may need to go beyond the experimentation stage and actually implement unprecedented services.

EXPANDED SERVICE OPTIONS

Information and Referral Services

Some libraries have set up basic information and referral (I&R) systems, which routinely draw upon unpublished, rapidly changing community data to answer questions that range from alcoholism to zoning. These libraries maintain files that deal with operational information about the community and its services; they attempt to link an individual with a need to the appropriate service to fill that need. Sometimes the information to fill the need is available directly throught the I&R service; more often the service functions as a basic switching center, directing people through a maze of services to the one best suited to their needs. People generally use I&R services when they have a perceived need — one that motivates them to seek help.

Information Counseling

The question of the librarian as a diagnostician of information needs, helping the user define the information problem and then prescribing solutions, raises a new dimension in I&R services. This process requires an increased level of followup and feedback to ensure that the user's problem has been solved.

Hotlines

Telephone hotlines that directly answer questions, counsel the questioner, and sometimes aid by direct action are a

rapidly growing phenomenon in the United States. Sometimes these are a regular part of a library's I & R service, or they are simply physically located near the library. More often, they have developed independently.

Selective Information

Selective dissemination of information (SDI) services might range from bulletins containing summaries on important political, social, cultural, and economic issues, to database searches for indepth information a user may require to solve a particular problem. Some libraries are now providing access to on-line databases, but usually these services require the individual to know exactly what is being sought. Effective SDI services will require the use of a variety of diagnostic, media, and transmission systems. These services could move libraries into the area of creating and "retailing" information; they may provide the dissemination and filtering techniques necessary to handle the mass of available information.

Some libraries are now providing access to on-line databases, but usually these services require that the individual know exactly what is being sought. Effective SDI services will require the use by libraries of both diagnostic and packaging systems.

Should libraries provide such expanded services as information and referral, information counseling, hotlines, and selective information?

THE NEED FOR COOPERATION

Cooperation among libraries and information services is important to achieve the goal of expanded services. There is an absolute need for control and access at the local level, yet a variety of larger cooperative efforts is necessary in order to develop cost-effective systems. Networks could

make possible the sharing of information. Many Federal information systems could appropriately serve a wider base of users. One example of such Federal systems is the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, which provides Issue Briefs, digests of legislation, and other significant information. Such could be made available to every library.

Cooperation to affect such services may be necessary at all local, State, and Federal levels, across jurisdictional lines, and across types of libraries. Maximizing the resources of public, special, Federal, State, and academic libraries, and private information services to ensure individuals' access to libraries and services may be achieved through both the identification of resources and through planned cooperative programs. A key consideration is how individual institutional integrity and service effectiveness can be maintained by smaller units within a large system.

THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

There are numerous alternatives facing the information community. Accurate, consistent, and comparative data to meet personal information needs will increasingly need to be developed and analyzed. Research will have to be undertaken to deal with the technological processes of meeting individual information needs as well as institutional delivery requirements. Methods of developing and accessing databases oriented toward the needs of individuals will need to be created and tested. Developing accountability measures will also be critical.

Who will develop such methodology? Who should participate in planning, testing, and evaluating it?

THE NEED FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

For new patterns of information transfer to be successful, information specialists must be trained to understand information needs from the individual's perspective. They must also be trained to use new technology, to create databanks, to utilize social

service skills, to develop diagnostic techniques, and to communicate with professionals in other agencies. This may require new kinds of education and training, extensive information science and media curricula revision, as well as continuing education and staff development.

Issue #2: What national policy issues must be addressed if libraries and information services are to effectively meet personal needs?

BACKGROUND

An information society raises constitutional, political, organizational, and technical questions. Among these is: is access to information a right of every individual? If so, who will make sure that right is upheld? What will be the mechanisms for ensuring equal distribution of information? When does privacy, confidentiality, or ownership take precedence? Who will bear the cost of information production and dissemination? What roles should Federal and local Governments and the private sector play to encourage a variety of information options and channels? Should the flow of information to individuals be regulated?

Existing information legislation on the national level is sporadic and sometimes even contradictory, dealing separately with free market business sectors and public utilities, such as broadcasting and public services and institutions such as libraries. Some 1,500 bills dealing with information were introduced in Congress during 1977/78; 74 of these became law. They ranged in scope from library funding to electronic funds transfer.

Legislative initiatives necessary to deal with the impact of communications technology on the right of privacy, and structural and procedural options for regulation of telecommunications are now being discussed and may have more far-reaching effects than we can presently envision.

The Government information structure is cumbersome and sometimes overlapping. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration within the Department of Commerce was created to recommend to the President policy development in both telecommunications and information areas. The Office of Management and Budget oversees Federal agency information activity. The Federal

Communications Commission (FCC) regulates the broadcasting industry. The Information Systems Office of the Library of Congress provides a legislative digest. The Legislative Information System (formerly the Bill Status System) provides the House of Representatives with similar data.

The Federal Government is a major compiler and distributor of information, as well as a principal subsidizer of information production through research. For example, President Carter recently signed into law such disparate measures as those setting up the National Adoption Data Gathering System, the National End Stage Renal Disease Medical Information System, and the Marine Safety Information System.

Recent years have witnessed the development of new private industries centering around the creation, production, processing, finding, and dissemination of information. Many utilize already existing information produced or supported by the Government. The database industry is expected to double in the next 10 years. There are information products available that go far beyond the traditional publishing products (books and magazines) libraries are geared to deal with. These new forms of information are often expensive. While library materials have never been free (citizens have paid for them through tax dollars), the cost of these services, coupled with a shrinking property-tax base, raises the specter of direct user fees.

Libraries have traditionally been viewed as public institutions that provide users "free" access to a wide variety of materials for educational and cultural enrichment. Librarians have supported the first amendment within their professional ethics, embodied in the Library Bill of Rights. In principle, if not in fact, basic to library collection development policies is an anticensorship stance and the concept of

providing materials on all sides of issues. But libraries have often played a somewhat passive role with respect to this concept. They tend to build generalized collections in an attempt to provide balance. Lifestyles in an information-demanding society may require a much more active stance by libraries.

POLICY ISSUES

Equal Access

Equal access to information is a natural extension of democratic principles. If information is a public good and an informed individual contributes to the benefit of society as a whole, then access to information must be guaranteed—not only in principle but in fact. Those with the competitive edge in life are those who are best informed. How can the total library and information resource of the Nation be made available to the maximum degree possible to all?

It can be argued that the producers and distributors of information are often subsidized through favorable legislation (postal rates), tax support (which benefits both libraries and publishers), and research support; but users of information are rarely subsidized.

What mechanisms are best for providing equal access? Some argue that public libraries, as free, tax-supported institutions, are a natural conduit. Others feel that the private sector can more efficiently process and transfer information to people. Still others maintain that only through coordinated networks linking all types of libraries can individuals have equity of access to the broad range of legal, technical, regulatory, scientific, medical, social, cultural, and other information necessary to meet personal needs.

Access also raises questions regarding the creation, production, and distribution of information. Information must exist in order to be accessed. Some argue that

freedom of information has been threatened in recent years by the trend toward large-corportion purchases of small publishing houses. This trend is partially a result of the inability of publishers to obtain financing for expansion through traditional means. For example, the Small Business Administration will not make loans to publishers because they are considered opinion-molders. While small and independent publishers are excellent sources of current social, political, and library materials, they are often outside the visible bibliographic network libraries traditionally use to identify materials.

Information must exist in order to be made available to individuals. It must then be identified and accessed. Are incentives to produce information necessary? Who should produce it? What information formats need to be encouraged? Is filtering and interpretation necessary? If so, by whom?

What kinds and levels of support are needed to provide equal access, and to close the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor? The problem is not so much in finding the answer as in developing policy that will encourage a continuous, flexible, and perhaps multiple framework to identify and deal with the problems.

Free vs fee

Information is an economic resource as important as energy. It is sometimes regarded as a commodity to be bought and sold, at other times, as a "public good" that should be available to all. The question is not so much "free" information—there is always cost. The basic question is who pays? Solutions to this problem vary in practice from local taxes at one end of the spectrum to direct user fees for on-line services at the other. Each of these has its own peculiar social, professional, and political implications.

Some segments of the private sector argue that the public library's ideal of providing free information will undermine the ability to recover and profit from the intensive capital investment necessary to develop new information services, particularly computer-based services.

Since libraries generally support the concept of no user charges, some have been faced with the dilemma of either charging or simply not providing new types of expanded services. Supporters of "free" service fear that user fees discriminate drastically against those who need information most.

Should those who need information pay for it? Should there be subsidies for those who cannot afford to pay? Should the costs of information service be totally institutionalized and made "free" to whomever needs it? What kind of fundamental commitment is needed to make this happen?

A National Agency

A frequent suggestion for resolving policy questions is the creation of a national information utility that would regulate and facilitate the information from all market sectors in all formats. Such a utility would be responsible for structuring and regulating the accessibility of information. Proponents of this proposed utility say that regulation similar to that of the Securities and Exchange Commission for money markets or the Federal Communications Commission for broadcasting is necessary because of the importance of equity in the information creation and transfer process to all citizens.

It is said that what happens in one sector influences both the kinds and costs of services that are available in the other sectors. Opponents of a Federal Government agency that might deal with the control, price, and flow of information argue that another bureaucracy will simply impede fair-market practices and go against the Federal trend toward deregulation.

Should information be treated as a national resource? Should access to all information, including the use of adequate information technologies, be a right guaranteed and monitored by Government, or should Government withdraw and allow a free-market situation to prevail? How should responsibility in this area be shared between the private sector and the local, State, and Federal Governments?

Resource Sharing

Effective networks of cooperation and support must be mapped out between public and private sectors if information access is to be achieved. The information agents in these sectors are diverse and include libraries (public and private), publishers, indexing and abstracting services, database producers, Government agencies, and other information services. These agencies are becoming increasingly intertwined; this complicates the question of where the dividing line falls between the responsibilities of the public sector and the private sector. Cooperation is essential if users are to have access to timely and accurate information when they need it.

A major concern of the private sector is its economic viability in view of the possibility that the sharing of resources through networks may result in a loss of sales. Librarians, on the other hand, claim that networks will lead to greater information use and hence, to increased revenues. An effective, nationally coordinated and cooperative network responsive to user needs can be implemented only after key basic policy questions are resolved.

Technology

Electronic technologies are reshaping our institutions. First, card files were replaced by computer printouts; these are now being replaced by video display terminals. It is becoming cheaper to create, distribute, and store information via electronic media than any other form. The outlook for the

immediate future is massive change in the mode of information transfer.

Communications technology will continue to evolve toward lower and lower costs for units of greater and greater capacity. An excellent example of this is the rapid development of hand calculators and personal computers. Cheap electronic communications can reduce the need for transportation and oil consumption and can provide the potential for tailoring information to individual needs. However, although the cost of information transfer may decline, the cost of the intellectual labor necessary to create and use information will increase.

Developments such as computers, telecommunications, and cable television do not generate information; they provide means to connect users with information. Such information must be organized in a way that matches information usage patterns and needs.

Technology promises multimedia home information systems within the next few years. But what happens to those who cannot afford these? What happens to those who are not able to use the technology? Is there a whole new level of literacy to be dealt with? How can we utilize technology for maximum individual interaction?

Some sociologists predict that in the short run, the information-rich will benefit more from new information services made available by communications technology, not only because they have the money and skills to use them, but also because they have awareness of the value of information. Technology may be an effective tool, but it is not a panacea for overcoming institutional and individual biases. As a Nation, we are probably closer to achieving technological advancement than we are to an institutional and social framework in which to handle it. An entire Nation must be oriented

to a new way of life and educated in the social, political, and economic changes wrought by these innovations.

A change in the nature of information transactions in organizations may be easier to achieve simultaneously with a change in information technology used for carrying such messages. The focus should not be on the technology itself—but on the policy questions and the consequences of the answers. The institutional structure controlling the development and use of the technology is the key. Will George Orwell's 1984 vision come true, or will political power be more widely distributed? How can we use technological advances to plan and restructure services to meet present and future needs?

THE NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Because of the potentials of machine manipulation of large quantities of data, the threat of eroding personal liberty and privacy arises. It may be necessary to postulate and implement policies that protect the individual.

Technology can be used for good or ill. Technology can lead to a great deal of pluralism and decentralization or the centralization of power. The use of electronic information systems must be carefully planned to consider the issues of security, privacy, accessibility, currentness, responsibility, and efficiency.

Legislation may be necessary that will provide for structuring the funding of libraries and information services, for copyrighting traditional and new forms of information, and for assigning responsibility for implementation of national information priorities.

The result of the pending reevaluation in the Congress of the Communications Act of 1934 can either encourage or impede access. Telecommunications technologies are now subject to regulation; a basic concept within the old law is the phrase "(to regulate) in the public interest, convenience, and necessity." Fundamental changes for

deregulation are currently being suggested that might leave this phrasing out, as well as eliminate Federal Communications Commission rules mandating public access channels. There is concern that without these elements the use of telecommunications for public programming and educational purposes would be severely limited.

This legislation is viewed as crucial because of the potential for information transfer to meet personal needs through interactive cable television systems.

The American Library Association supports some continued minimum regulation, including sufficient channel capacity to meet anticipated community needs, technical compatibility to interconnect with local and national systems, minimum basic services to rural areas, cable equity requirements for all communities, and favorable rates for libraries and other educational institutions.

Issue #3: How should library and information services be expanded or redesigned to meet the needs of special constituencies?

BACKGROUND

Five to ten million people in the United States have no library service, and millions more have access to only substandard service, according to the "1975 National Inventory of Library Needs" conducted for NCLIS. Demographic changes, economic results of population redistribution, resource shortages, technological changes, altered lifestyles, and changing values are creating potential library users with entirely new types of information needs.

It is generally acknowledged that with the exception of experimental programs usually supported through Federal funds, ethnic minorities, the aged, the handicapped, residents of rural areas, the economically deprived, and the socially and culturally exceptional have not been well served.

One in every nine Americans—25 million people—live at or below the official poverty level. A disproportionately large segment of the poor are aged, black, Spanish-speaking, or members of other minority groups. A majority of families living in poverty are headed by women.

Fifteen years of declining birth rates, combined with increased longevity, have drastically changed the composition of the population. The number of children under age 15 has dropped by 6.4 million, while the 24-34 year old group has grown by 7.9 million. Only 38 percent of American households have children living in them. Because the birth rate among minority populations is higher than the rate for the population as a whole, minority youths will make up an increasingly larger share of the future youth population.

The number of citizens age 65 and older has increased by 3.4 million. By 1980, one out of 10 Americans will be age 65. The average income of Americans over age 65 is $6,300, just $100 above the official poverty

level of $6,200. Approximately 25 percent of citizens over 65 are relatively immobile. Aproximately 45 percent of women in the 20-24 age group are single, compared with 28 percent 20 years ago. The median age of our population is steadily increasing. By 1990, the 25-45 age block will be the largest.

There are 1.3 million blind, 8.2 million visually impaired, 2.4 million deaf, and 11.4 million disabled people living in the United States. Over 6.5 million persons are mentally retarded. Some 2 million citizens are institutionalized; a major national goal is to return at least one-third of these to the community.

Twenty-nine percent of the population live in rural areas, but 43 percent of the Nation's poor live there. In urban areas, one person in eight lives below the poverty level, in rural areas—one in four. (Martin 1978) (Pifer 1978)

While all individuals need information in its most useable form, a greater challenge is presented to service delivery organizations in serving underserved and unserved constituencies. It is argued that information is needed more by the educationally and economically deprived because they have not had the opportunity to acquire information that others have had. There are needs for special packaging and provision of information for the unserved. The poor often have limited energy and resources to spend on information because of the demands of the daily struggle to survive.

Many unserved constituencies not only lack knowledge of library systems, but do not believe that any formal systems can work for them. Others are inhibited by architectural barriers, geographic remoteness, language, attitudes, and library requirements.

Services to all sectors of the information poor have often been sporadic and/or haphazard. Although increased attention is

being given to civil rights of the handicapped, the removal of architectural barriers, and the provision of special services, the handicapped are still severely limited in their choices because of physical inaccessibility and format limitations.

As previously noted, some libraries have experimented with expanded services. According to a 1978 report by the International City Managers Association, 60.2 percent of municipal libraries offer services to shutins and 43.8 percent to institutionalized persons; 40.5 percent offer service to the handicapped; and 46.4 percent have school programs for young adults. Only 25.5 percent report operating bookmobiles, although there have also been experiments with other types of facilities such as storefront libraries and kiosks. (International City Managers Association 1978)

Some key questions are the following. At what governmental level should services to the unserved be funded? What types of special legislation are needed for local, State, and Federal support of the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of services?

WHOM SHOULD LIBRARIES SERVE?

Faced with an increasing economic squeeze, some argue that in order to survive, public libraries must continue to serve those who utilize them most. To extend service to so-called special constituencies is too costly and best left to other agencies.

Yet, traditionally, libraries have gone on record as supporting the goal of universality of service. Libraries have an obligation to develop a realistic framework to turn this goal into an operational reality. Equality of access involves active outreach to and servicing of the information-poor. They may have specific information needs, in the areas of educational opportunity, legal rights, jobs, career counseling, housing, health, welfare assistance, consumer

information, political information, and family counseling. They also need information about recreation, religion, and cultural heritage. After such information is delivered, the information poor also need additional assistance with interpretation and implementation.

Continuity of service is essential if programs are to be effective. Often, just when special constituencies have begun to realize that libraries can help them, federally supported programs and services are discontinued. This results, it is argued, from the traditional view that the library's first and only responsibility is to the self-activating—those who come to the library and are equipped to use it to satisfy their personal needs. Nontraditional services rarely occur unless special funds are available for "extra" services.

A careful development of new programs, objectives, and goals to provide effective service to new constituencies means more than simple quantitative services. New qualitative standards for service will need to be acknowledged and developed. New institutional goals and priorities will have to be formulated. A key consideration in service to unserved constituencies is that libraries should not function as elite institutions handing out goods to the less fortunate. Instead, mechanisms should be developed for all citizens to participate in information system planning and service. Multilingual, convenient, and useful information must be seen as a major function. Information provided at the right time and at the right place may not only enrich but may also save lives.

WHAT CURRENT FEDERAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS EXIST?

The Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA)

The Federal Government initiated funding specifically for public libraries in 1956 to provide general support for library

services in geographic areas without adequate services and to persons with special needs. As amended, LSCA supplies funds for: programs of service to the handicapped, the disadvantaged, and persons in institutions; construction and renovation of facilities (not funded since 1973); and library network programs and grants for cooperative projects among public, academic, school, State, and special libraries. An amendment has recently been passed to help meet the urgent needs of urban libraries.

The Federal Government has channeled LSCA funds through State library agencies. This has increased State support of public libraries by requiring matching funds and the preparation of State plans.

In 21 years the Federal Government has supplied $790 million to libraries through LSCA (from $2 million in 1957 to $60 million in 1977). (NCLIS 1976) These funds have unquestionably expanded and improved public library services. The program has been weakened, however, by insufficient funds to reach its goals, uncertain and fluctuating support from year to year, the absence of adequate Federal structure and guidelines, and too little sharing of information about programs.

National Library Service for the Blind and Handicapped

The Congress has acknowledged the importance of the right of equality of access by funding the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Even so, the blind and handicapped have access to less than three percent of the nearly 50,000 new books available to the sighted population each year, not to mention other print and visual information sources. (American Library Association 1979) The National Library Service provides nationwide service through four regional centers. Presently, these centers are threatened by proposed limits in the

program for Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Because of the special and unique nature of materials needed by the handicapped, as well as the problem of architectural barriers, what additional funding should be provided to ensure an ongoing national commitment to the developmentally and physically handicapped? What about institutionalized individuals? What kinds of subsidies may be necessary for the creation and dissemination of special materials?

RESOURCE SHARING

Many services to the handicapped and the institutionalized have been centered at the State level. Issues surrounding school/public library cooperation and public library/ welfare department cooperation are indicative of the range of levels to be dealt with in meeting personal information needs. The special needs of the underserved and the unserved (language, formats, delivery systems) require particular attention in the planning and development of integrated social services. Cooperation between all types of libraries and other agencies will be necessary to maximize service.

THE NEED FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The integration of services to special constituencies and the reordering of institutional priorities will necessitate a shift in the basic educational format for information professionals. This shift regards the use of books and other media in the theraupeutic process (bibliotherapy), multi-language, multimedia, and other communications skills.

Of particular necessity will be continuing education seminars, workshops, and other instructional units to train staff to work with and serve special constituencies.

The recruitment of staff members representative of special constitutencies, the provison of sufficient staff, and the

use of volunteers are other training issues to be considered.

THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

We know very little about information transfer and use patterns among the unserved. What we do know has not been widely applied. What type of staff is most sensitive and effective? What kinds of information systems should be designed? What technologies and formats can most effectively fill unmet needs? How can credibility of service be enhanced? Can effective services be "mainstreamed" and integrated to become basic library and information functions? Who will support or perform such research? How can user interaction be ensured?

Issue #4: What legislative and funding initiatives are required to foster effective use of limited resources in our Nation's libraries?

BACKGROUND

More than 100,000 libraries of various types in the United States are dispensing information in schools, business organizations, colleges and universities, and communities. Individual information services are providing information through numerous multilevel, multiparticipant public and private systems.

The size, activity, and cost of library and information services have increased at rates higher than the growth rates of the population, and in some cases, the rate of the Gross National Product (GNP).

According to the National Inventory of Library Needs 1975, a little more than $1 billion was spent in 1974 for public library operations; another billion would have been needed to support the libraries at the per-capita level information service providers regard as adequate. The projected need for support after 1977 (adjusted to take into account service extensions, increases in use, and similar factors), was well above $2 billion, a figure that exceeds current funding.

Despite acknowledged gaps in service and increasing costs, libraries have been faced with an apparent reluctance by government at local, State, and Federal levels to provide increased fiscal support. Since the middle 1960's, both Federal and State Governments have recognized that disparities in services resulting from inequities in local wealth must be remedied. Still, the overwhelming portion of public library costs falls on local governments; the primary source of funds for public libraries is the property tax, although there has been some shift to State financial responsibility in recent years. From 1972 to 1975, the percentage of Federal support decreased from six to five percent, local support decreased from 83 percent to 82 percent, and State

rose from 11 to 13 percent, leaving a net gain of 0. Annual per-capita expenditures for library service range from less than $1 to more than $15; the national average is $5.15. Local governments spend less than one percent of their operating budgets on libraries. Current ratios of funding clearly discriminate against poorer communities. Only nine percent of the population have libraries that meet minimum levels of operating expenditures. (NCLIS/Government Studies 1977) (NCLIS/Ladd 1977) (NCLIS 1978)

Although actual dollar amounts allocated to support libraries have doubled between 1965 and 1975, actual expenditures are falling well behind needed levels for additional materials and new dimensions of service; this is a result of both inflation and the increasing amount of information available.

New technological systems hold the promises of more efficient delivery and lower costs. The past decade has been a time of growth for library systems, networks, consortia, and other cooperative projects, some of which take advantage of new technological applications. However, the lack of uniformity of standards, cost accounting, policies and procedures, and jurisdictional responsibilities has sometimes locked resources into inaccessible and cumbersome boundaries.

NCLIS has developed a goal for delivery of information to the user, no matter where such information is located and without violation of laws and regulations. It is argued that this goal can only be accomplished through cost-effective and equitable resource-sharing, the sensitive application of new technologies, and the development of new service and delivery systems.

THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL NETWORK

Proponents of a national network believe that the question of equitable access will not be resolved until systematic change through centralized services is achieved.

Such a national network would mean a sharing of costs, revenues, and operating responsibilities among all levels—public and private—of library and information services. This implies a new orientation both to funding and to the economics of information.

Service philosophies and operating procedures may also have to change. A nationwide network will have to connect disparate systems; common languages and procedures will need to be developed to allow for modification and experimentation.

Some have questioned the amount of flexibility possible in such a national network. On the one hand is a need for national cooperation in order to achieve economy; on the other is the danger of bureaucratic centralization and loss of local control. A prime consideration in network design must be the ability to provide effective local service to individuals with personal information needs.

Jurisdictional Levels

NCLIS has suggested a conceptual framework for a nationwide network. The Federal Government will fund the parts of the network that support national objectives and that stimulate statewide and regional library development. State governments will bear the major share of the cost of encouraging, coordinating, and supporting the State components, as well as part of the cost of participating in multistate planning. The strengthening of State library agencies will be essential under this plan.

Questions under such a plan include: What will be the role of the Library of Congress and other Federal libraries? What will be the involvement of the private sector, special libraries, and information producers, brokers, and distributors? What roles will other agencies—social welfare, child care, medical, legal, etc.—have? How will the needs of all—from the preschool child to the scientist—be met? How will networking be accomplished? How will local, State, and

regional autonomy be preserved under a coordinated system? What kind of flexibility will be needed on the part of all participants?

National Structures

A variety of national structures has been suggested as possible components of this national information network. These include:

a. A National Information Resource Center to assist institutions and users with new technology as it applies to their needs.
b. A Federal agency charged with implementing and coordinating a national program under the policy guidance of NCLIS. Such an agency would have authority to award grants and contracts but would be supportive and coordinative rather than regulatory.
c. A national computerized bibliographic database to facilitate locating material.
d. A structure comparable with such bodies as the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.
e. A Department of Education, which would offer the opportunity for more powerful representation within the Federal Government for promoting existing cagetorical library programs.
f. A National Library Agency, as proposed in the National Library Act — a recent bill initiated by the National Citizens Emergency Committee to Save Our Public Libraries. The National Library Act would replace the Library Services and Construction Act with an expanded program of aid to public libraries.[1]

[1]The bill provides for direct financial assistance for public libraries on a matching 20 percent Federal, 50 percent State, 30 percent local basis. It would continue public library construction assistance, establish grants for services to special constituencies, assist interlibrary cooperation—including development and maintenance of library and information networks—and fund special training programs for library personnel.

g. The Library of Congress, designated as the National Library, with the responsibility for coordination of networks.

h. A national referral service (such as the defunct Library of Congress hotline project).

FUNDING NEEDS

Many feel that major changes in Federal policy will be necessary to ensure mutually reinforcing formulas between State, local, institutional, and private funding. Present policies foster neither cooperation nor efficiency; a sharing of inadequate resources could be disastrous. Proponents of new funding patterns argue that while LSCA has been instrumental in encouraging growth in State government participation in library financing, the level of State as well as local response has been inadequate.

Several alternatives have been suggested. These include:

a. Direct Federal funding at the 75-90 percent of total cost level.

b. Expanded State funding to the 75-90 percent level.

c. A staged funding program, moving toward a balanced intergovernmental funding system. A recent report recommended 20 percent Federal funding, 50 percent State, and 30 percent local. This also is the level of funding requested by the National Library Act.

ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Legal mechanisms that will allow for equitable access under resource sharing will need to be developed to deal with the question of the rights of the creators, packagers, and distributors of information; new technology creates new questions regarding copyright. Not only is photocopying a problem; other questions such as off-air taping must also be considered. In addition, economic incentives and tax subsidies, mandated by special programs, may be needed to encourage the

public sector to develop and apply needed technology and packaging.

The Nation lacks effective methods for coherent identification of and access to its vast information resources. We also do not have sufficient data concerning such issues as most effective use, organization, communication, and control of information resources. These and other elements are necessary in formulating program and goal objectives. Training of both users and information personnel in the use of new technologies, systems, types of libraries, and information-transfer processes will be essential in any effective cooperative delivery system.

Issue #5: What measures will encourage maximum use of the Nation's information resources?

BACKGROUND

Some policy planners and many individuals do not consider libraries strategic access points for filling information needs. This attitude is recurrent and circular. Libraries and information services find that people are often reluctant to invest time and money to search for information in libraries because they anticipate that they will not find it. In part, this is because libraries have limited resources due to lack of funding. Taxpayers are reluctant to support libraries because they are not perceived as convenient, accessible, or relevant in filling information needs.

The problem of utilization is even further complicated by a pervasive lack of awareness of the value of information, especially in highly structured and new formats. It is more convenient to rely on family or peers than to search through what may be perceived as a bureaucratic maze. This perception is not always inaccurate.

Libraries are open for limited hours, often only during the working time of much of the public. They are also hampered in their service capabilities by physical and financial resources. While the traditional clientele of libraries is changing, knowledge about new and potential users is minimal. The little research that has been performed has not been widely applied. Technology and new information formats are now available, but libraries have been often unable or unwilling to utilize some of these because of lack of funds, untrained personnel, outdated techniques, or the costs of adapting to new systems.

The lack of public awareness about libraries and information services, as well as misperceptions as to their credibility and effectiveness, can be viewed as further barriers to equitable access to information. Even given a reordering of institutional priorities and the expansion of services,

the actual utilization of libraries by individuals will not change unless the public perception of libraries changes. If libraries are not viewed as the first place to go to answer a personal need, at least they must be viewed as one among several important places.

COOPERATION

The question of what kinds of library and information service networks, systems, cooperative structures will be most cost-service-effective is the key to providing quality library and information services. Equally as important is the initiating role local libraries may have to take in order to enlist the cooperation of other organizations, such as social service units, community groups and private industry.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Libraries are not viewed as dynamic and accessible information agencies in our society. If services are expanded, redesigned, or reordered, the issue of accessibility will still exist unless individuals are informed about service changes and encouraged to take advantage of new opportunities. Planned programs of public and community relations will have to be carefully developed and implemented if user perception of the library as "a quiet place in which to check out books" is to be changed to an awareness of the library as a dynamic and important information institution—one that can and will help them meet their personal needs.

If access to information is considered an inalienable right, then education about the nature of information and its applications also becomes a key issue. Citizens will then need to understand the mechanisms for accessing information, how to pose their questions, what to expect from the answers they receive, and how to use the answers. This understanding could start at the earliest levels of education. Formal curricula need to be reexamined to

accommodate quickly changing social, institutional, and technological frameworks.

Perhaps increased educational communication will need to take place between library and information personnel and users. Librarians may need to do more than teach users how to use card catalogs and indexes; they may need to introduce users to database search strategies, assist in evaluating information, and provide training in the technological jargon. Additional education may be needed to teach personnel in other related agencies about information, as well as those who design and set public policies.

INFORMATION PACKAGING

Information is often inaccessible to individual users because of format barriers, physical handicap, variation in language, or illiteracy. It is often said that libraries are too "print" oriented and have lagged behind in providing a variety of information formats.

Many feel that research on the most effective forms for the presentation of information (film, video, print, computer output, microfilm, audio) to meet personal needs is necessary, as well as the subsequent production and provision of information materials. It is argued that a total concept of media and communications technology in libraries is vital to extend user-oriented services. What kinds of levels of cooperation between the public and private sectors are necessary to facilitate the information flow through multiple formats to meet the needs of users?

APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology such as telecommunications, telefacsimile, video, microcomputers, and other new and developing interactive systems offer rapid, cost-effective methods for obtaining information. Inequities of access caused by inadequate resources, geographic and architectural barriers, and economic deprivation, can be eliminated by carefully planned uses of technology.

However, machines and systems are only mechanisms; the real issue is: how can they be designed so that they meet the personal needs of users?

There is no question that expanding the information services of libraries to provide timely and useable information through such mechanisms as information and referral will increase utilization. However, expanded hours of service, new methods for information delivery via telephone, cable, and teletext, home information systems, and audio and computer technology will all have to be developed along with expanded sensitivity to the needs of clients.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

It is sometimes argued that libraries try to fit individuals into a rigid institutional framework rather than to successfully adapt services to the individual's conceptual framework. What kinds of demonstration projects, feasibility studies, evaluations of pilot programs, and cost analyses are necessary to design or redesign services? How can we monitor new technological developments and impacts? What other kinds of information do we need in order to make decisions about information priorities, policies, goals, and objectives? What are the most effective ways to train both individuals and information personnel to understand and use new media, technologies, systems, and information-transfer processes? Who should fund such research, and where should it be conducted?

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation in the planning and development of library and information services to meet personal information needs is increasingly seen as crucial to effective service. It is argued that a useful and workable national information system responsive to individual needs can be achieved only through the development of policy by all sectors—including the private citizen. A citizens' lobby has been suggested. How should such a lobby

function? Are there other mechanisms that might be considered to facilitate grassroots input? How can libraries and information services become more accountable to all citizens?

POLICIES

Broad policies at the national level and specific policies at local and State levels of government will be necessary to ensure that library and information services are available and utilized by every individual. Increased awareness, education, service, and access to information will undoubtedly result in an increased demand for information.

What kinds of policies at what levels of government are necessary to support new library and information service priorities that will enable individuals to meet their personal needs?

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